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The situation in the Middle East

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Identical letters dated 15 January 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On 8 and 14 January 2009, Israeli forces pounded Lebanese territories with mortar bombs in flagrant and blatant violation of the Blue Line and Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). While Israel claimed that its violations were in response to rockets launched from Lebanese territories, Lebanon wishes to denounce the Israeli actions as unjustifiable and constituting a violation of Lebanese sovereignty.

Israel undertook a serious unilateral action, undermining the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which is working closely with both parties in order to address all inc...nts in a way that safeguards stability and security in its area of operation.

On 14 January 2009, a Joint Investigation Committee consisting of the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL was established to investigate the firing of an unknown number of rockets from Lebanese territory towards the Occupied Territories. The investigation concluded that two grad missiles were fired from Lebanese territory, and that due to the failure of one missile and a malfunction in the other, both missiles landed inside Lebanese territory and did not reach the Occupied Territories.

The investigation also concluded that, shortly after the incident, Israel fired 15 155mm shells towards Lebanese territory, targeting the launching and impact sites of the two missiles inside Lebanese territory.

This unjustifiable Israeli targeting took place, despite the fact that no missiles reached the Occupied Territories.

The Lebanese Government wishes to reiterate its firm position condemning any violation of resolution 1701 (2006), regardless of its justification, and its rejection of any hostile activities within the UNIFIL area of operation as per Security Council resolution 1701 (2006).

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The Lebanese authorities are actively cooperating with UNIFIL in ensuring peace and security in South Lebanon. I wish to emphasize the gravity of Israel's unilateral actions, which are untenable and which add to the ongoing Israeli violations of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006). These violations include, among others, overflights and the occupation of the Lebanese part of Al-Ghajar and of Shab'a Farms.

I kindly request that the present letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 15.

(*Signed*) Majdi **Ramadan**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.